

A SOCIALIST COMMENTARY ON COLONIAL AFFAIRS

Venture

JOURNAL OF THE FABIAN COLONIAL BUREAU

Vol. I No. 7

AUGUST 1949

MONTHLY 6d.

Incorporating *Empire*

Comment

CONSERVATIVE CANT

THE Conservative Central Office has produced a most attractive-looking booklet on Imperial Policy.¹ Having duly appreciated the cover, the excellent photographs, the quality of the paper and the type, as well as the sonorous recommendations regarding an Empire and Commonwealth Defence Council, a Commonwealth Combined Staff, a new Commonwealth Tribunal, and Imperial Preference, one turns, with a natural quickening of the pulses, to the section on the Colonies. What a cosy warm bath of platitudes greets one here! The standard of living must be raised, resources must be developed, peoples must be guided along the road to self-government within the framework of . . . need the sentence be finished? Education must not produce a class of 'black-coated workers who grow up to despise those who work with their hands,' the rights of labour must be safeguarded, proper use of the land, radios and films, self-government 'as soon as the Colonial peoples are ready for it'—we can say it all in our sleep by now. Almost every word of these proposals is quite unexceptional; the broad and soothing generalisations reeled out would be acceptable to every Party. But four things are lacking in this statement—first, a single spark, however dim, of original thought; second, a generous recognition that almost every one of the proposals set out with seeming inspiration, is already accepted and even *functioning* policy; an appreciation, however limited, of the difficulties in the way; and fourth, a glimmering of understanding that the colonial peoples are sick to death of all this unctuous paternalism. If it were not for these little gaps, the statement would be beyond criticism. Has not

our contemporary *East Africa and Rhodesia* hailed it as 'a modern-minded, bracing piece of work, very much in line with the best thought in the best Colonial circles'? If only we, too, could be introduced into the 'best colonial circles' and partake of their 'best thought,' we might also produce such illuminating new suggestions as 'a vigorous campaign against soil erosion,' 'the elimination of debilitating diseases,' and 'the Conservative Party . . . will do its best to see that Colonial people have enough to eat. . . .' We might even have had the novel idea of 'favouring the extension of co-operative producer and credit societies' and recognising 'the value of a sound Trade Union movement'!

HERE ARE THE FACTS . . .

EVERY year the Secretary of State for the Colonies presents to Parliament an account of his stewardship. This year's statement, *The Colonial Territories, 1948-1949*,¹ has just appeared, and for the earnest seeker after information it is an excellent half-a-crown's worth. Packed tightly into 136 pages he will find recounted every fact relating to a year's progress in political and constitutional affairs, economic development, finance and social services in the 45 territories of the Colonial Empire, not to mention a survey of the organisational affairs of the Colonial Office and Colonial Service, an account of research work being undertaken, and a résumé of the colonial aspects of international relations. The scope of the information, and the range of activity outlined are most impressive. Opening the Report at random one picks up sentences such as these: 'Teaching in the Faculty of Medicine at the University College of the West Indies began in October, 1948.' 'At the end of the year there were over 3,400 colonial students in the U.K. of whom

¹ *A Statement of Conservative Policy for the British Empire and Commonwealth*. One shilling.

¹ Cmd. 7715. H.M.S.O. 2s. 6d.

1,400 held scholarships.' 'Gross capital investment projected for 1948 for all Colonies was found to amount to a total of about £188 millions.' 'At all levels of government, from the central machine to the rural and urban local authorities, a single deliberate policy of broadening popular representation and enlarging responsible public control of local affairs is being implemented in each of the African territories.' 'Cyprus has been entirely cleared of the malarial mosquito; not one new infection was reported during 1948.' How much planning, effort, money, initiative and endurance have gone into making any of these sentences—and hundreds more like them—a reality!

CANDOUR AND THE COLONIAL OFFICE

IN the face of this remarkable tale of activity and achievement one hesitates to strike even the mildest of critical notes. Yet there is a curious flatness about the recital, as if all the events it records were taking place in a two-dimensional world. There is no light and shade; each fact has the same stress as every other, and no one would suspect that behind them all is a 'third dimension' of human aspirations and discontents which by no means fit in neatly with the trim pattern of progress outlined. Who would glean any inkling from the sections on Uganda that the worst riots known in that country for years would have broken out before the Report was in print? Who would suspect that the Gold Coast was in political turmoil? Even where difficulties and failures are reported, they come clothed in a comfortable garb of under-statement, any unpleasant impression being immediately softened by the enumeration of offsetting successes. It is excellent to have these factual surveys from the Colonial Office, and only the most mean-spirited or prejudiced would fail to appreciate the terrific work now being done in the Colonies. But could not a report like this be accompanied by a frank and challenging statement of the *real* problems—an account of the three-dimensional *living reality* in the Colonies to-day, instead of the uniform two-dimensional grey of an official catalogue? The Labour Government has not hesitated to produce just such challenging statements about our economic position at home, in its annual *Economic Surveys* which are among the best-sellers of the bookstalls. Why should it be thought necessary to treat colonial problems with so very much less candour?

COLONIAL MONTH

A brave and imaginative attempt has been made in the last month to interest the British public in the Colonies. The idea—sponsored by the Colonial Office—was to run a Colonial Month, during which a number of special exhibitions, films, broadcasts, lectures and displays would bring home to the man in the street something of the problems and progress of the British Colonies. Part of the arrangements were official; part were run voluntarily by a whole series of different organisations—missionary, patriotic, scientific, artistic, commercial. The highlight on the official side was the opening at the Colonial Office where the King and Queen, who attended, had presented to them representatives of each individual Colony. Of outstanding interest, also, was the admirable display in Oxford Street, organised by the Central Office of Information, under the title of *Focus on Colonial Progress*. This exhibition has drawn record attendances; there have been continual queues outside the hall, awaiting admission, and the show has been extended for an extra few weeks. It was a well-arranged display likely to appeal to the general public, however ignorant of Colonial affairs. One entered through a 'jungle,' with temperature at tropical levels and hoarse bird cries among the dense foliage. This put the visitor in the right frame of mind to start with, and although the exotic level could not be maintained throughout, there was sufficient drama in the moving picture of soil erosion, the living locusts, the excellent short films, and the 'talking room' where the colonial origin of every article in daily use was proclaimed in a continuous gramophone performance, to hold attention to the end. There were also exhibitions of colonial interest at Kew Gardens, the Zoo, the Public Records office, the National Gallery, and other public institutions.

Naturally, in a series of displays of this sort, the accent has been mainly on progress and success. It was only when one could tune in to some of the Third Programme broadcasts under the heading. *The Colonial Dilemma*, that one came face to face with the difficult realities. There is so much more to colonial problems than fighting the locust and the tsetse fly, providing clinics, or advancing education. But the more fundamental issues are scarcely amenable to public exhibition. It was, on the whole, a considerable achievement that complacency was avoided. Perhaps the change in mental climate, in this respect, can best be appreciated when one compares the spirit of Colonial Month with the old Empire Day posturings.

CHANGING FACE OF THE FAR EAST

WE live in a revolutionary epoch, and no part of our world has seen profounder changes in this last ten years than the Far East. The British Territories in this region—particularly Hong Kong and Malaya—have suffered, like the rest, and still are suffering, from the intense turmoil and social ferment born of war, Japanese occupation, the spread of Communism, and the growth of a surging nationalism. There is a theme here for the pen of an inspired writer and the shrewdest of political observers; if the Colonial Office, in its recent blue book,¹ does not quite achieve the imaginative understanding one might have hoped for, it would be unfair to blame it. Within certain limits its report—the first of a news series of five-yearly reports dealing with each of the main colonial regions during the preceding four or five years—is quite remarkably good.

What is the tale it tells? All the British Far Eastern territories were occupied by the Japanese, Sarawak, Brunei, North Borneo, as well as Hong Kong and Malaya. All suffered from severe destruction, all were subject to looting by the Japanese, and the local people, from Allied bombing and from the neglect of the economic and social services. In North Borneo, because of the re-conquering of the territory in June, 1945, devastation was complete. The rehabilitation of the Colonies over the last five years can only be measured in terms of the desolation that existed at the time of the Japanese surrender. Everything that would contribute to their war effort and to the wealth and prestige of Japan had been plundered. Cars, food, ships, railway engines, iron and steel, precious books, furniture, carpets, pianos and the personal possessions of the conquered people. In Hong Kong the population had been reduced from 1½ million to half-a-million. Roads were overgrown, the harbour was littered with wrecks, thousands of houses destroyed, the University, schools, hospitals stripped of their valuable equipment.

Planning Units were set up in London in 1943. Military governments were ready to take over but staffs and supplies were inadequate and transport presented every imaginable difficulty. Underlying all effort was the disintegrating factor of the shortage of rice. The people of all the territories had been semi-starved and were suffering from severe malnutrition. Their greatest need was an

abundance of rice, which was simply not obtainable as all the Far Eastern rice granaries had been seriously affected by the war. The labour troubles of the early days were based on this shortage more than any other factor. All the shortages were carried over to the civil administrations of 1946 and are only slowly being overcome.

In spite of this Hong Kong and Malaya have already achieved post-war prosperity with their imports and exports higher than 1941. Hong Kong has benefited from the civil war in China by the transfer of manufacturing and commercial houses from Shanghai. The University has been re-started with a grant of £250,000 from the Treasury and a like amount from the Government of Hong Kong together with an enhanced annual grant. There has been a rapid growth in the social services though free compulsory education is still not a practical possibility. The Medical Department records a lower infant mortality rate than in any previous year. There have been no widespread epidemics owing to increased vaccination and inoculation. The Salaries Commission has ironed out one of the biggest pre-war grievances by giving equal salaries to Europeans and local people with the same qualifications. Progress has been made in the organisation of agricultural and fishing marketing co-operatives. The fishing industry now has 5,000 junks and 60,000 workers, the biggest fishing fleet operated from any port. Agricultural co-operatives in the New Territories are gaining support.

Hong Kong an Asylum

The Colony has steadfastly maintained its neutrality in the civil war in China. Refugees of all political parties have poured into the Colony, published their journals and newspapers. One result of maintaining the traditional toleration of political refugees is seen in the trade union organisation. There are two structures controlled by the Kuomintang and the Communists, with the Communists gaining ground since the military victories in China.

The record of economic progress in Malaya is impressive but has been limited by the uprising of bandits, supported by Communists, mainly Chinese, in an attempt to overthrow the Government. In spite of conditions of danger and uncertainty, tin and rubber exports have exceeded pre-war records, railways have been rehabilitated,

¹ *British Dependencies in the Far East, 1945-1949*. Cmd. 7709. H.M.S.O. 2s.

airfields built, and a start has been made in providing Malays with primary education and English secondary schools for Malays and Chinese. The University has received one million grant from the Treasury. The general health of the population has improved and the death rate has fallen. Singapore has a particularly well-developed social welfare department and has launched large schemes of re-housing. After setbacks through Communist control, the Trade Union Movement is now on sound lines with an excellent British adviser. The constitutional arrangements in Singapore and Malaya have been revolutionised.

It is a relief to turn from the war shadows of Malaya to the peaceful progress of North Borneo, Brunei and Sarawak. The oilfield of Brunei is now the most important in the British Commonwealth, the Colony is increasing its rice production. Rubber is still the mainstay of North Borneo but experiments are being made with cocoa. There are encouraging possibilities in the development of the timber industry. The main problems of the Borneo territories are shortage of labour and technical staff, and much has to be done in the extension of communications. In Sarawak, settling down after the political troubles of the cession from the Brooke family, there is hope of more oil through drilling and prospecting, while the production of timber, sago, flour, rubber, rice and copra are all showing healthy signs of increase. The medical services of all territories have been developed; North Borneo has done particularly well in the rebuilding of hospitals destroyed during the war and in the construction of three new hospitals. Sarawak is embarking on an imaginative enterprise of boat dispensaries and looking forward to the organising of co-operatives.

Political Appreciation Inadequate

Even this brief review indicates the solid economic and social achievements since the Japanese surrender. But what evidence is there of an understanding of the post-war emotions of East Asia underlined by the demands for independence, agrarian reform and education? Has economic achievement been balanced by political and psychological insight? The Report lacks any adequate discussion of these burning questions. The references to political issues in Malaya are disturbing, but superficial. The story of the Chinese resistance movement there and the co-operation between the Chinese and British told so magnificently by Colonel Chapman in *The Jungle is Neutral* cannot be forgotten, yet these are in part the same Chinese groups which are respons-

ible to-day for death and destruction. Why is this? Were opportunities lost by a lack of political foresight in post-war Malaya? Could this war have been prevented? It has caused the widening of the rift between the Chinese and Malays, and with no sign of a positive British policy aimed at the welding of the races, the outlook is depressing. The future is overcast, also, by the uncertainty of China's policy under a Communist Government towards South-East Asia. Needless to say, their broadcasts have accused the British of imperialist oppression. Chinese have been deported from Malaya and thrown into Kuomintang concentration camps on their arrival in China; over 4,000 suspects are detained; there is the death penalty for carrying arms, the shooting on warning; the operations against the squatters. All these measures are justified on the grounds of military necessity. But violence breeds violence, and there is no indication that the Government realises the importance of a political counter-offensive.¹

In Hong Kong, with the Chinese Communists approaching South China and the increase of Kuomintang refugees from Canton, there has been a tightening-up of political control by the passing of the Societies Ordinance under which all organisations with more than ten members must register with the Chief of Police; trade unions also in order to be registered must be free from any degree of control outside of the Colony. The new regulations have been fiercely attacked over the Peiping radio and branded as 'imperialist.' But the Government is in a tight spot with the two warring parties fighting for the upper hand in Hong Kong and with the dangerous and illegal third force of the Triad societies, capable of sabotage, violence and extortion and at present linked with the Kuomintang.

What is to be done? Internally and externally Hong Kong is too vulnerable for re-inforcements and oppressive ordinances to maintain the peace. Violence and blockade, strikes and sabotage can only bring hardship to the Chinese people and destroy the service that the Colony has given to China as well as to Britain. Negotiations between the British Government and the Chinese Communists are essential. But of this there is no mention. Perhaps the main criticism of this Report, reflecting as it does the core of our attitude to the Far East, is that it suggests a belief that new constitutions, economics and trade unions will do the trick. In the Asia of to-day, they are, emphatically, not enough.

¹ This question is discussed in *Colonial Opinion*, June number of *Venture*.

'HAPPY' UGANDA

BY

Valentine Elliott

UGANDA has a population of approximately four millions. The large majority of the inhabitants are Africans, of the remainder, fifteen thousand are Asiatics, and only two thousand Europeans. These Europeans are mainly officials, missionaries and business men; there are very few settlers.

The African inhabitants are not all of one tribe. There are half a dozen major tribes and a number of smaller ones. Much the biggest tribe is that of the Baganda, from whom the country takes its name. They were the strongest in pre-European days, and had a comparatively advanced system of government, centred upon their hereditary ruler, the Kabaka. The first Europeans to reach the country thought them exceptionally intelligent. Mission work, which has played a vital part in the recent history of Uganda, started among them; and they have had the greatest proportion of educated people ever since. It is therefore no accident that most of the significant events of the last fifty years have happened in the Kingdom of Buganda.

For many years prior to 1945 the territory was known in European circles as 'Happy' Uganda. It will be instructive to see why.

First, the racial rivalry which complicated the development of some other parts of Africa—the neighbouring colony of Kenya, for instance—was not in evidence in Uganda. So far as Buganda was concerned, the 1899 'Buganda Agreement' secured the land to the Africans, at least, to those of them who were landowners. In Uganda as a whole, Europeans and Asiatics can only hold land on lease, and after careful enquiry as to the needs of the African population. The country was a protectorate, not a colony, and was recognised as a 'native state.' European-African relations were friendly, though formal. There were few of the irritating restrictions of the 'Europeans only' type.

Secondly, 'Indirect Rule,' the sacrosanct policy of that era of British administration, seemed to work exceptionally well in Uganda. The indigenous political structures were mainly of a feudal type; and here as elsewhere, the British administration was at its best when dealing with a society in many respects aristocratic.

Thirdly, the cultivation of cotton was bringing the territory comparative prosperity. The total value of exports before the war was in the neighbourhood of £4m., of which cotton accounted for £3m.

In 1945 a disorderly general strike burst like a bomb-shell into this Arcadian scene. The European officials were shocked and affronted by such an unprecedented event; but it was clear that the old days had gone, and that an era of change and turmoil had set in.

The roots of the 1945 troubles were by no means all of recent growth. True, the war had put up the cost of living, and wages had not risen accordingly. But behind this immediate cause there lay a good deal of long-standing anti-European feeling, coupled with strong opposition to those chiefs who were supposed to be in the pocket of the government. Education, and the change from traditional ways of life to wage-earning occupations had

produced the inevitable crop of malcontents. Many educated people were beginning to want a greater share in the affairs of the country. And behind all, there were the constant intrigues and struggles for power of the great chiefs.

Some reforms were made after 1945, among them the admission of a minority of indirectly elected members to the Buganda Lukiko, the traditional council of chiefs; and the setting up of new provincial councils of the same type in the other provinces. It is also fair to state that the government embarked upon some far-reaching economic development schemes.

These reforms did nothing to satisfy the discontented elements. Most of the educated class were debarred from sitting in the councils, because they were civil servants. Even the admission of three African nominees to the Legislative Council was received with little enthusiasm, since it was clear that they were likely to be chiefs. Moreover, new grievances arose, among them the partial link-up of the East African territories under the new High Commission. The Baganda, jealous for their land, have always resisted anything in the nature of a link with Kenya.

The Post-War Bataka

During the last four years, a strong opposition group has appeared, centred upon the traditional clan leaders, the Bataka. These leaders, not to be confused with the appointed chiefs who run local government, have certain grievances of their own, dating back to the 1899 agreement. But at present their chief function seems to be to provide a name, traditional and therefore acceptable to a nationalist-minded group, for the new opposition movement. This movement has become a Cave of Adullam for people with all sorts of grievances, and no doubt for a few unscrupulous self-seekers as well. Whether it is a minority movement it is impossible at present to tell. Even if it is, it is by no means a small minority. There is even some possibility that the Bataka will become a national movement to which all patriotic Baganda will feel it their duty to belong. Probably much depends on the treatment and opportunities accorded to the educated class in the next year or two.

It has been suggested that in Uganda, as in other colonial territories, discontent is stirred up by Communist agents. So far as Uganda is concerned, this is extremely doubtful. There is quite enough discontent in the country to explain the present difficulties without having recourse to the Communist bogey. And it is significant that the outbreak of 1945 occurred before this bogey had been built up.

A commission is at present sitting on the disturbances which occurred this year. Whatever its findings may be, it is certain that Uganda is in for a period of growing pains; and that sympathy and imagination will be necessary on the part of both Africans and Europeans who are concerned with its affairs.



GREATER change during the last continent. The turn all countries into pence and agrar a steady retreat of France and Holland adjusting their polid China, American f dominant role, prolo port of the Kuomins

India, Pakistan and pence within 1 Burma chose to rem destructive civil war munist. China is political, agrarian re of the Chinese Com Indonesia have a po that have broken e Philippines were giv States in August, 19 war promise, but th dent on America fo the Americans have The story of the B 'Changing Face of

Siam accepted J the war and escaped of the other countr country has led an obnoxious dictator threat which it fears

INDIA AND PAKISTAN

- September 3, 1941.—War declared on behalf of India by the Viceroy. Congress Governments resign in protest.
- 1940.—Muslim League demands Pakistan. Cripps Mission. 'Quit India' movement.
- December, 1941.—'Indian National Army' organised in Burma.
- 1942.—Congress leaders jailed. Strikes and disorders.
- 1946.—Cabinet Mission to India.
- February, 1947.—British Government announces plan for transferring power by June, 1948.
- August 15, 1947.—Indian and Pakistan Independence Day.
- January 30, 1948.—Mahatma Gandhi assassinated.
- May, 1949.—India and Pakistan decide to remain in the British Commonwealth.

CEYLON

- 1943.—British Government states its intention to re-examine the Donoughmore Reforms of 1931 at the end of the war.
- 1945.—Report of the Soulbury Commission.
- September, 1947.—General Election.
- January, 1948.—Independence for Ceylon as a Dominion within the British Commonwealth.

BURMA

- March 8, 1942.—Japanese occupied Rangoon.
- January 27, 1947.—British Government and Burma Executive Council reached agreement 'as to the methods by which the people of Burma may achieve their independence either within or without the Commonwealth as soon as possible.'
- September 24, 1947.—Constitution of the Union of Burma.
- January 4, 1948.—Independence Day (outside the British Commonwealth).

EVOLUTION

broken place in Asia than in any other Pacific War stirred demand for independence. There has been imperialism, though sound difficulty in war changes. In policy has played a civil war by its sup-

have achieved independence Commonwealth. and has fought a war and the Communist completion of a under the leadership of Viet Nam and of agreements between the United States and again. The evidence by the United States of a pre- are largely dependent economic survival and important naval bases. tendencies is told in 'East' (p. 3).

direction throughout the East Asia. The critical life under an only 'imperialist' in China.



VIET NAM

- July 25, 1941-1945.—Occupation of the whole of French Indo-China by the Japanese. 'Franco-Japanese Common Defence Pact' and co-operation.
- March 19, 1945.—Proclamation of 'Independence' of Indo-China by the Japanese. Puppet Government presided over by Emperor Bao Dai.
- September 2, 1945.—Declaration of Independence of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, presided over by Ho Chi Minh.
- March 6, 1946.—Agreement between France and Republic of Viet Nam.
- November 19, 1946.—Agreement breaks down on French refusal to include Cochin China. Widespread fighting.
- June 5, 1948.—Agreement between French High Commissioner and Bao Dai to bye-pass Ho Chi Minh Government.
- April 26, 1949.—Bao Dai returns as 'Emperor' of the Republic of Viet Nam with French military support. Ho Chi Minh controls 95 per cent. of the countryside. Bao Dai hold the towns. War continues.

INDONESIA

- August, 1945.—Declaration of Independence.
- September, 1945.—Surrender of Japanese forces. British reinforcements.
- July, 1947.—'Police action' by the Dutch. Intervention of Security Council. Good Offices Commission set up.
- January, 1948.—The 'Renville Principles,' sovereignty remaining in Holland until United States of Indonesia set up.
- September, 1948.—Insurrection of Communists—against Republican Government.
- December, 1948.—Breakdown of negotiations under United Nations, Dutch launch military attack.
- January, 1949.—Nehru summons New Delhi Conference of 19 nations in support of Indonesians.
- June-July, 1949.—Evacuation of Dutch, return of Republican Government to Jogjakarta under United Nations' observers.
- Round-Table Conference planned for transfer of sovereignty and establishment of Netherlands-Indonesian Union.

(Continued on p. 10)

COLONIAL OPINION . . .

Leadership

In January, 1949, we reprinted from the Comet, Nigeria, Zik's ideas on leadership. A month later we quoted from the Ghana Statesman, Gold Coast, some further ideas on the qualities required of national leaders. From the Bahamas there now comes an editorial article on the 'Beatitudes of a Leader' which was published in the light of approaching general elections.

BLESSED is the leader who has not sought the high places, but who has been drafted into service because of his ability and willingness to serve.

BLESSED is the leader who knows where he is going, why he is going, and how to get there.

BLESSED is the leader who knows no discouragement, who presents no alibi.

BLESSED is the leader who knows how to lead without being dictatorial; true leaders are humble.

BLESSED is the leader who seeks for the best for those he serves.

BLESSED is the leader who leads for the good of the most concerned, and not for the personal gratification of his own ideas.

BLESSED is the leader who marches with the group, interprets correctly the signs on the pathway that leads to success.

BLESSED is the leader who has his head in the clouds but his feet on the ground.

BLESSED is the leader who considers leadership an opportunity for service.

The Voice, Nassau, 9 April, 1949.

'Thou Shalt Have No Other Gods Before Me'

The other day we were deeply grieved to read in the *West African Pilot* that Mazi Mbonu Ojike, one of our prophets of nationalism, had refused to take oath on the Bible on entering the witness box in a court of law and had insisted on touching a knife to his tongue, thereby swearing by the Yoruba god of iron.

This sort of thing would be laughable if it was not so tragic. For a long time now we have been hearing of the 'God of Africa' as though He was a different God who did not make the Europeans, Asiatics, Americans, Australians, etc. This is sheer paganism. A degeneration from the Father God who made and loves all his human children.

What is so tragic about it is that it is a slavish copy of the spiritual degeneracy of Europe and America that has produced nation-worship as a substitute for the God of Love. John Bull, Marianne, the British Lion, the German Eagle, etc., were the idols they worshipped. Kipling sang of the 'White Man's Burden and the Lesser Breeds Beneath the Law.' Rozenburg, the philosopher of Nazism, attempted to revive the worship of ancient German pagan gods, Thor and Odin and Ojike wants to go back to the Yoruba god of iron.

How unoriginal! How intellectually sterile! And where has the spiritual degeneration led Europe and America? To two devastating world wars and a sterile peace full of lies, intrigues and sordid selfishness.

Ashanti Pioneer, 9 April, 1949.

Contrasts

In April, 1948, African disturbances broke out in Bulawayo, S. Rhodesia. A Commission of Inquiry has now reported. The main causes of the trouble are found to be the rise in the cost of living of the African people unaccompanied by adequate wage increases. The Commission recommended that, in order to prevent a recurrence of similar disturbances, the African workers must be able to voice their complaints and to get into touch with their employers, but it was doubtful whether Africans were ready for relying on trade unions to ventilate their grievances. The Minister of Native Affairs has now issued a statement saying that before native trade unions can be recognised, Africans must understand the principles of trade unionism and appreciate their responsibilities. The mass of Africans, so it is stated, has not yet arrived at this stage. The time is not yet ripe for the statutory recognition of their trade unions.

This is reported in the Bantu Mirror of 5 March, 1949. In the same paper, on 5 February, 1949, the following paragraph appears:—

PHENOMENAL GROWTH OF TRADE UNIONS IN N. RHODESIA

Membership of Seven Thousand in One Year

Started last year, African trade unions in N. Rhodesia have made a phenomenal growth and have now a membership of 7,000. This information is given by the Lusaka correspondent of the *Bulawayo Chronicle*, who says that the movement has about 5,000 members in Nkana, about 1,000 in Mufulira and Road Antelope and Chingola have about 500 each.

At present the unions operate separately in the four mines, but steps will be taken shortly towards amalgamation, and it is expected that by the end of this month a single union will be formed, the report says.

So far very little approaches have been made to the officials, the Nkana union being the only one which has made representations to the Compound Manager on minor affairs. . .

It is not thought that any representations will be made to the Chamber of Mines, before amalgamation takes place.

A union has also been started by shop assistants at Ndola and recently negotiated with the Chamber of Commerce for higher wages.

Bantu Mirror, 5 February, 1949.

CORRESPONDENCE

South Africa and the Three British Protectorates

To the Editor of *Venture*.

Sir,

Dr. Malan's statement in Parliament regarding the future of the Protectorates, followed by Mr. Noel-Baker's announcement¹ that His Majesty's Government is considering Dr. Malan's request to incorporate the Protectorates, has caused a stir throughout Basutoland and the sister Protectorates. We wish here to state that we Africans of Basutoland shall oppose incorporation with bull-dog tenacity, for by it we shall have nothing to gain but much to lose.

(1) We shall lose freedom of speech and association. This is evidenced by the fact that not so long ago Mr. Sam Kahn, a duly elected Parliamentary representative of the African people, was denied the right to address meetings in Johannesburg and Pretoria, because the Union Government brooks no criticism. But the same Government does not raise as much as a finger when white politicians and ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church make the most inflammatory speeches calculated to incite racial hatred among the various racial groups of the Union.

(2) We shall lose freedom of movement. Support for this contention is to be found in what Mr. Schoeman, Minister of Labour, told the Senate recently. Among other things he said: 'I think it is unfair to the non-European himself to allow him to go overseas, especially in a country where there is no colour bar and no discrimination . . . and then have him come back to our conditions here. While there is a Nationalist Government I don't think that will be allowed.' At the present time the Government of Basutoland has embarked upon the scheme of sending annually two Basuto young men to British Universities to further their studies; if we are incorporated into the Union, the Nationalist Government will put a full-stop to this 'nonsense' for they will not countenance a native sitting side by side with white students, listening to the same lecturers, and proving that after all he is not mentally inferior to the European as we are often made to believe.

(3) We shall lose our right to make our voice heard in the administration of our affairs. At present the Africans in the Union are a voteless majority in a population of 11,000,000. Their destinies are in the hands of a powerful minority who are determined to perpetuate white supremacy at the expense of non-European advancement. As if that were not enough, the present Nationalist Government is threatening to do away with even the limited political rights hitherto enjoyed by the African and Coloured people of the Cape. We in Basutoland have our own National Council of which we are very proud. True, it is not a legislative body, but at least it enables us to make our voice heard by constitutional means, and it is our earnest hope that it is but a halfway house to policy maturity, and that in the not too distant future it will gradually assume the character of a legislative body. We feel sure that this is bound to come soon, because it is the declared policy of H.M. Government that all Colonies shall be administered with a view to their ultimate independence.

The only thing we shall gain by incorporation is that mirage of 'apartheid.' We of the Protectorates shall

never submit to such an odious policy. If 'apartheid' were to be carried out to its logical conclusion, no level-headed African would quarrel with it, but it was never intended to apply that way. It is a cloak of oppression, a policy of hitting the 'Kaffir' with an iron fist in a velvet glove—a fist-and-boot policy. We therefore do not hesitate to curse it with bell, book and candle.

Dr. Malan bases his claim to incorporate the Protectorates on the South Africa Act, which to him is the most sacrosanct constitutional document ever made, whose provisions the British Government cannot lightly put aside, but must carry out to the letter. Yet funny enough, when he seeks to deprive the Africans and Coloureds of their vote, he does not scruple to invoke the aid of the same Act by declaring that the sovereignty of Parliament overrides the entrenched clauses. He further argues that no generation has any right to legislate for future generations, and therefore his government cannot be bound by what was done forty years ago. The entrenched clauses, so far as he is concerned, are written on a 'scrap of paper.' But Dr. Malan cannot have it both ways. He either has to respect or reject the provisions of the South Africa Act *in toto*, instead of becoming a political chameleon and changing his colour to suit his own ends.

But whatever the British Government might decide to do, one thing is certain; we shall not allow ourselves to be dragged into the political whirlpool of the Union with its 'apartheid,' pass laws, and what-not. It is better to die in defence of freedom, than to live and be slaves to all eternity.

B. Makalo Khaketla.

B. Kokolia Taoana.

K. E. Ntsane.

E. Selai Mohapi.

Basutoland High School,
P.O. Maseru, Basutoland.

¹The most recent statement by Mr. Noel-Baker was on May 6 in Parliament. 'There has been no change in our policy in the matter, and if there were to be a consultation with the people, it would be a genuine consultation.'—ED.

The Great Tree

Africa, the great tree, land of our ancestors.

Where all the fowls of Heaven made their nests in your boughs,

Where under your branches the beasts of the field brought forth their young;

Where under your shadow dwell all nations,

That is your fair in your greatness.

The length of your branches are like roots in great waters.

Like a bird the riches of nationalism can take wings and fly away!

Oh! Africa, whom does thou pass in beauty? Labour not to be rich; And cease, from your own wisdom;

For riches certainly make themselves wings,

For they fly away as an eagle towards heaven.

Titus L. Moetlo.

(Reprinted from the *Bantu World*.)

Guide to Books

The British Yoke

By E. W. Evans. (William Hodge. 12s. 6d.)

After reading this book attentively from beginning to end, one is left wondering why it was written, and what exactly it is trying to say. For paragraph after paragraph, page after page (and some paragraphs are pages long) we are told, in quite a pleasant, chatty way, facts about the Colonies which anyone interested in the Empire certainly knows perfectly well already. It is difficult to pick out of the mass of verbiage one single original fact, or even an original way of presenting the facts, let alone an original thought. Only rarely are judgments expressed—and then sometimes they are unexceptionable, at other times they can be violently controverted, such as the dogmatic statement on the final page that 'African self-government stands adjourned *sine die*.' It is not even clear if the writer has any coherent views of his own; at times he writes almost as if he were that much-maligned animal, a 'Fabian.' At other times he makes it clear that he thinks little of the Fabian Society; indeed our activities as a 'pressure group,' involved in 'long-distance lobbying' and 'wire-pulling' are, by implication, deplored; Mr. Evans is too polite and equivocal to condemn them openly. He is less than fair to the very real development in political life in the Colonies, and to the greatly increased prestige and stature of Colonial Legislatures in recent years, when he writes that owing to activities such as ours 'the centre of political gravity has shifted away from the forum of the local legislature to the metropolitan nerve-centre.' Nothing could be less true. We are keenly aware to what an extent exactly the *reverse process* is taking place; we ourselves are constantly requesting our friends in the Colonies to take their problems to their own reconstituted Legislative Councils and not to rely on London interference.

The British Yoke gives the impression of having been

(Continued from page 7)

THE PHILIPPINES

October, 1944-1945.—Landing of Americans and reconquering of the territories.

August, 1946.—Independence of the Philippines.

BRITISH DEPENDENCIES, HONG KONG, MALAYA, SARAWAK, NORTH BORNEO AND BRUNEI

1943.—Planning Units set up in London to prepare for liberation.

June, 1945.—Australian landings in Brunei and N. Borneo.

June, 1946.—Transfer of N. Borneo to the Crown.

July, 1946.—Sarawak becomes a Colony.

May, 1947.—Unofficial majority in Singapore Legislative Council.

July, 1947.—Revised constitutional proposals for Federation of Malaya.

June, 1948.—Outbreak of bandits supported by Communists in Malaya.

written by a well-meaning, but not very politically-acute ex-official, who is mildly entertaining and instructive but whose mind does not lend itself to the new, the bold or the challenging.

Modern Political Constitutions

By C. F. Strong. (Sidgwick & Jackson. 25s.)

This is an excellent text-book for the student of constitutions and constitutional history; and everyone who is closely interested in colonial affairs to-day must be numbered among such students. Dr. Strong writes for the serious-minded scholar—in easy clear language, concluding each chapter with a reading list and 'Subjects for Essays.' A list of some of his chapter heads will indicate the range of the subject matter. The Unitary State; the Federal State; the Flexible Constitution; the Rigid Constitution; the Legislature; the Parliamentary Executive; the Judiciary; Constitutional Experiments among Non-European Peoples; the Economic Organisation of the State. For people in the many Colonies which are now undergoing constitutional changes a concise, intelligible summary like this might well prove invaluable, and we heartily recommend it. The chapter dealing with the Colonies directly is, however, very sketchy. It is a pity that so many writers on political science ignore this exciting field of progress, and the fascinating problems (such as that of the mixed society) which the Colonies pose.

WHY OUR CHILDREN DIE

The causes and suggestions for the prevention of Infant Mortality in West Africa

by

SANYA DOJO ONABAMIRO

with a Foreword by

Professor Lancelot Hogben

A remarkable book by a Nigerian from the Ijebu Province dealing with the most urgent problem of our largest Colony.

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KOFI ANTUBAM AND DENIS WILLIAMS

At The Berkeley Galleries

The present exhibition at the Berkeley Galleries of these two young native artists shows the consistent technical facility now to be expected from the non-European student trained in European Schools of Art. There is so often a seemingly instinctive respect for particular mediums and their right usage: a respect that Europeans have progressively lost during the last hundred years. The Asiatic, African, and American still have as their goal the European schools of practice, but it seems more aware to-day than perhaps twenty years ago that they inherit in their own lands great creative sources more suitable to their purposes than the Europeanisms that contented their elder brothers after the first world war.

Kofi Antubam, of the Gold Coast, is pleasantly representative of this coming-of-age: Denis Williams, from British Guiana, not so pleasantly but with the disconcerting power of an assured virtuoso. Mr. Kofi Antubam has the serenity of a self-confident decorator and teacher of his own people in the formal dignity and colour inherent in their traditional everyday living. He is a civilised man who sees no inconsistency in an educated African people developing spiritually and materially in a predominant native culture.

Mr. Denis Williams, on the other hand, has found a strange and rather ominous sympathy between the

urgently primitive and the most sophisticated eroticism of the School of Paris. As a painter he is technically brilliant with a lovely appreciation of, and power over, the texture of pigment. His confident sense of tonal values is more apparent than his powers as a colourist, and he is very sure of himself as a balanced draughtsman with an understanding of the confines of his picture space. The present affinity of some of his work with that of modern European masters is more apparent than real, and there should be little doubt that immediately he re-subjects himself to his native inspiration his great talent will discard extraneous circumstances and find its natural expression.

Both these young men have distinguished themselves at home as native students and have been awarded European travelling scholarships. Their return to natural sources armed with a more complete technique, and experienced in some of the pitfalls as well as the advantages of training in present-day European Schools of Art, should be an event in art educational circles of both the Gold Coast and British Guiana.

The Berkeley Galleries are to be congratulated upon an unusually interesting exhibition with far-reaching aesthetic and ethnological implications.

Kenneth Romney-Towndrow.

Empire and After

RITA HINDEN

200 pages. Demy 8vo. Cloth Boards, Gilt. 12s. 6d. net.

A STUDY OF BRITISH IMPERIAL ATTITUDES

Empire and After is an analysis of the changes throughout the centuries in British opinion on the possession of Colonies. It begins with the seventeenth century, when Colonies were thought to exist 'for the Glory of God and the utility of the Britons,' and traces the swing in thought through the writings of Adam Smith in the eighteenth century, the anti-imperialists of the mid-nineteenth century, and the new Imperialists of the end-nineteenth century. The challenge against the Imperialist conception takes on new shape with the growth of Socialism and Communism in the twentieth century, and special chapters deal with the attitude of the Labour Movement to empire. The book continues with a description of the heart-searchings on the subject of empire during the war, and the new attitudes which have emerged so strongly since 1945. The final chapter, 'After Empire,' discusses the shape of the new association of nations now evolving out of the old imperialist relationships.

Socialism: The British Way

Foreword by the RIGHT HON. HERBERT MORRISON, P.C., M.P.

10s. Net.

An assessment of the nature and significance of the Socialist experiment carried out in Great Britain by the Labour Government of 1945.

Contributors: The late Evan F. M. Durbin, M.P.; Prof. G. D. H. Cole; John Diamond, M.P.; Margaret Cole; James Callaghan, M.P.; Dr. Frank Hardie; Ben Roberts; Dr. Stephen Taylor, M.P.; Dr. Rita Hinden; Hon. Harold Nicholson; Michael Young.

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Parliament

Since the recess, from June 21 to July 6, 63 questions were asked on colonial affairs. We can only select a few which will give our readers an indication of the scope of interest.

Development in Mauritius. Mr. Sorensen asked what developments had taken place in Mauritius in regard to providing houses for the labourers; and whether the desirability of building these near, instead of on, the sugar estates would be borne in mind; what consideration had been given to the necessity of providing a girls secondary school, other than the existing denominational school; how many Indian or coloured girls were receiving secondary school education; and what religious obligations were such girls expected to fulfil; what progress had been made in the compulsory purchase of land and a plan of land settlement to meet the needs of the population, particularly in view of the possibility of increased unemployment. Mr. Rees-Williams replied that all these matters fell within the responsibility of the Government of Mauritius, which had a Legislative Council with an elected majority. The Governor had been asked for information, but there was a limit to the amount of detail which ought to be supplied by the Minister as a number of such matters were under the control of the local authority. Mr. Sorensen asked that the Speaker would give guidance in view of what the Minister had said as to whether Members were prevented from putting down such questions. Mr. Speaker asked Mr. Sorensen to write to him and he would give a considered reply. (July 6.)

Arrests in Nigeria. Mr. Sorensen asked for further enquiries to be made into the circumstances of the arrest and sentence within three hours on February 17 at Akoko District, Nigeria, of 82 elderly men arising out of their repudiation of the Oba of Oleshtua because of his alleged oppression and why the requested transfer of these cases to magistrate of the Supreme Court was not allowed. In a supplementary question Mr. Sorensen asked whether the Secretary of State was aware that these men were serving a year simply because they refused to recognise the Oba. Mr. Creech Jones replied that the matter was receiving investigation and that he did not know of anything he could do further. (June 29.)

Aid to African Farmers in Kenya. Mr. H. D. Hughes asked what provisions are envisaged for the provision of cheap finance and other assistance for African farmers in Kenya comparable to the measures proposed to aid European farmers under the new Agrarian Bill and would he see that what funds were available for agricultural development would be fairly shared between the communities according to need? Mr. Creech Jones replied that a Committee was at present considering the ways and means of providing agricultural credit for African farmers. He added that the whole system under which the African peasant worked was fundamentally different from the system in regard to European agriculture and stock-breeding, and consequently the proposals which were made related to the specific problems of European farming and would not necessarily apply to African farming. The suggestions which had been made by the Government were in the hands of the Africans through their representatives on public bodies. (June 29.)

Colonial Development and Welfare expenditure. Replying to a question from Mr. Piratin, Mr. Creech Jones said that in 1946-47, £3,150,000 had been spent; in 1947-48, £5,130,000, and in 1948-49, £6,240,000. Mr. Creech Jones added that during the past year there had been a tremendous speed-up in regard to the delivery of capital goods and other raw materials required for development work. (June 22.)

Citizenship of Afrikaners in British Colonies. Mr. Skinnard asked whether in view of legislation denying full citizenship rights to settlers in South Africa, he would take corresponding action against Afrikaner immigrants, who, in large numbers, had entered and were entering Northern Rhodesia and Kenya, and was not the whole position of these two Colonies likely to be changed even in racial characteristics. Mr. Rees-Williams said that no action would be taken on the citizenship question; that a fairly heavy immigration had taken place in Northern Rhodesia, but not so heavy into Kenya in the last two or three years. (July 6.)

Japanese immigration into South-East Asia. Mr. Reid asked what action was proposed from American representations to allow emigration from over-crowded Japan to British Colonies in South-East Asia. Mr. Rees-Williams said that no such representations had been received and that no settlement of Japanese in British or British protected territories in South-East Asia which they occupied during the war could be entertained. (July 6.)

For Reference

August, 1949

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